2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Steps to promote the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and the realization of the goals and objectives of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East

Report submitted by Australia

1. Australia fully supports the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Australia has joined the consensus every year at the United Nations General Assembly in support of the resolution calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East freely arrived at among States of the region.

2. In the context of Australia's support for universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Australia calls on Israel, as for other States yet to join the Treaty, to accede to it as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

3. The Additional Protocol on strengthened IAEA safeguards offers Middle East States an important confidence-building opportunity. Australia welcomes the implementation on a provisional basis of additional protocols by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and looks forward to their ratification. Australia will continue to urge conclusion by Middle East States of the Additional Protocol without delay or precondition.

4. Australia has joined with other IAEA Board members in urging Iran to resolve the continuing international concerns about its nuclear programme. Iran must urgently cooperate fully with IAEA to resolve outstanding questions, as must States, entities and persons that have supplied Iran's nuclear programme.

5. Australia welcomed Libya's historic decision in December 2003 to eliminate verifiably all materials, equipment and programmes leading to the production of nuclear weapons. Libya's actions stand as a prominent example of the benefits available to States that embrace transparency and commit to compliance with the highest nuclear non-proliferation standards.

6. While countries of the Middle East would need to take the initiative in developing a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, membership of and adherence to existing treaties and instruments would be a step towards this aim. Australia contributes to the goal of such a zone through

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its efforts to achieve universal membership of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, and our active support for the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, adopted in The Hague.

7. Australia is active in efforts to achieve universal application of nuclear safeguards measures — in the Middle East and elsewhere.

8. Australia fully supports the Middle East peace process and welcomes the good progress that has recently been made on this issue. The best prospect for such a peace remains a two-State solution that will ensure Israel's security and provide for a viable and stable Palestinian State. Australia has consistently urged both parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map to Middle East peace, which still offers the most practical way forward in achieving this objective. We have been encouraged by the renewed efforts of the Palestinian Authority to stop terrorism, and by Israel's commitment to withdraw from Gaza.